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Of Original Sin.

A
S E R M O N

Preach'd before the
RIGHT HONOURABLE,
THE
Lord Mayor and Aldermen
AT THE
CATHEDRAL CHURCH
OF
St. PAUL, LONDON
Feb. 22. 17¹²/₁₃.

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The Fourth Edition.

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Hoare Mayor.

*Cur' Special' tent' in Festo Sti. Matthæ
Apostoli, scil. Die Martis xxiv. Die
Februar' 1712. Annoque Regni Re-
ginae ANNÆ, Magnæ Britannia
&c. undecimo.*

THIS Court doth desire the Reverend Dr
Delaune to print his Sermon preached at
the Church of St. Paul, on Sunday last, before
the Lord-Mayor and Aldermen of this City.



GIBSON

PSALM LI. v.

*Behold I was shapen in Iniquity, and
in Sin did my Mother conceive me.*

TO *Know ourselves*, was noble Advice;
and would justly have entitled the
Author of it to great Wisdom, if, at
the same Time, he could have told
how that *Knowledge* was to be attained. But,
alas! how can we be said to *Know Ourselves*, if
we are ignorant of our spiritual State, and know
not on what Terms we stand with our Creator,
the Author of our Beings, and consequently, the
Fountain of all the Good they are capable of?

Other Knowledge may serve for a grateful Amusement to the Mind, and be allowed an Ornament of it also; but would be vain and fruitless as to the main Concern of Life, which is chiefly to *Know* what Part we have in the Love or Displeasure of our G o d, and how His Favour is either to be Recovered or Kept: For on this alone, not any short, uncertain, or deceitful Pleasures, but an immutable State of perfect Happiness both depend. And this Nothing but our holy Religion can teach us.

Now, though the first View of ourselves with which it presents us, be a very dismal one, nothing but Sin and Misery: Yet we shall soon

find, that the Commanding Voice of the Eternal Word can from thence bid Comfort arise, as it once did Light out of Darkness; and that

Rom. v. 20. *the Grace of GOD is much more abounding than the Wickedness of Man.*

But my Text only draws the melancholy Scene, and opens before us our Misery; represents Man as a Creature very early in Rebellion against his Maker, from the very Womb an hateful Object to the pure Eyes of GOD, and a Vessel of his Wrath: It tells us, that Sin begins with our very Beings, that it is Part of our Composition, and interwoven with our Thread of Life; the first Spark of which is no sooner kindled in us, but the Sinner begins to move: For, if holy *David* justly might, who ought not with the most profound Humility thus to lament himself? *Behold, I was shapen in Iniquity, and in Sin did my Mother conceive me.*

Which Words are not an Hyperbolical Aggravation of *David's* actual Sins, as the *Pelagians* of old, the *Socinians*, and some others at this Day vainly pretend, only to make them consistent with their Scheme of Religion; for they set forth a Sin quite of another kind; a Sin in our very Frame and Conception, and are a plain and positive Assertion of the Catholick Doctrine of *Original Sin*. Now if there be no such Sin, these words are so far from being an Hyperbole, that they contain a meer Fiction; they do not aggravate what is, but acknowledge what has no Reality at all. The Subject of this Discourse, then, must be *Original Sin*, which is sometimes taken more largely, as comprehending both the first Sin of

Adam

am imputed to all his Posterity, and together
with it the inherent Pollution of our Natures
derived from it: And sometimes more strictly,
the latter alone; not excluding, but supposing
former, as the Cause and Foundation of it.
Text leads me to consider it only in this last
sense, as it signifies the natural Corruption in
which we are conceived and born. And in dis-
cussing upon it, I shall proceed in this Method,

First, I shall shew, That Man is very much
altered from what he was at his first Creation.

Secondly, That this Alteration consists in a cor-
rupted and depraved Nature, derived down to us
from our first Parents.

Thirdly, That this Original Corruption in us
is the true and formal Nature of Sin.

Fourthly, I shall consider the chief Objections
which have been urged by the Adversaries of
this Doctrine, and so conclude.

First then, I am to shew, that Man is very much
altered from what he was at his first Creation.

The Disorder that is in human Nature, is too
manifest to want Revelation for the Discovery of
it: They who wanted that, have complained of
it in all Ages, but for want of it, have been at a
great Loss for the Cause. That Opinion which
generally Prevailed, was the Doctrine of the
existence of Souls; which was brought into
the World by Pythagoras, but had spread itself very
far

far before his Time, and continues to this Day in the *Eastern* Parts of the World.

Great Defects were observ'd in all the Power of Man; his Understanding dark, his Will weak and yet obstinate, his Appetites irregular, and his Passions strong: And it was very rightly concluded, that so absurd a Composition could not come immediately out of the wise and powerful Hands of God, but that this must needs be a State of Punishment. But then they looked on the Souls of Men to be of too pure, refined and exalted a Nature, to be originally designed by God for Companions of this sinful Clothed Earth; and therefore imagined, that these Spirits had an Existence of their own before, but that some Transgressions having offended their Maker, that this Case of Flesh was so contrived as a Punishment for them; into which they were cast as into a Work-house, and there condemned to hard Labour, the perpetual Drudgery of struggling with the unruly Appetites of Flesh and Blood, so contrary to the Purity and Dignity of their Nature.

This had the Face of a plausible Hypothesis, and so long as it seemed to solve an apparent Difficulty, its own Absurdities were overlooked. No Notice was taken of the Incongruity of Man's Creation thus by Pieces; or by God uniting two Natures together, which they themselves supposed so unsuitable to each other, and of the unavoidable Consequence of God's punishing thereby the Author of Sin.

But if they had preserved the History of their own Descent, they would have known that

Body and Soul were matched together in Love;
 and designed by G O D for inseparable Compa-
 nions: That the noblest Creature in the visible
 World resulted from that Union; the only Crea-
 re endu'd with Abilities to praise his Maker,
 and under Him to have the Dominion of this
 Globe of Earth: That as Man came thus direct-
 out of an Almighty Hand, guided by infinite
 Wisdom and Goodness, it was impossible he
 could want any Endowments that were suitable
 to his Nature. And since he was brought into
 the World at full Age, not like an Infant, only
 with Capacities which Time by slow Degrees
 to fill up, he must necessarily be created with
 those Qualities which are perfective of his
 Nature, as well as essential to it; for otherwise
 the Workmanship of G O D had been defective,
 which is no less absurd, than impious to suppose.
 If we therefore consider what Man ought to
 be, we shall know what Man was at his first Crea-
 tion; and to know what Man ought to be, we
 must consider what natural Powers G O D has gi-
 ven him. As he is a rational Creature, he is of
 necessity a moral Agent; he knows he has a
 Maker, whom it is his Duty to adore and serve.
 And as he is compounded of Flesh and Spirit,
 he finds in himself Powers very different in their
 Nature and Perfection, and that a due and regu-
 lar Subordination among them is necessary to at-
 tain the Ends of his Creation, the Glory of God,
 and his own Happiness. Some of them are made
 to be governed, and kept in Subjection; others
 to have the Command over them: He has a Power
 of Election, by which he is Master of his own
 Actions,

Actions, which is called the Will; with Appetite to incline or draw it, and when Occasion requires, Passions to drive it: And over all, an Understanding to preside and govern, and That be regulated by the Law of G O D.

When Things are thus, Man is in the perfectest State his Nature is capable of in this World a truly noble Creature, and worthy of his Maker. This therefore must certainly be the Condition in which God made him, and which our Church in the Ninth Article, using the Language of Orthodox Christians, calls *Original Righteousness*. Without which, after a moral Agent was made G O D could not, upon a Review of his Works have pronounced *All Good*; or be said to have made Man in His own Image, notwithstanding the Spirituality and Immortality of his Soul, unless He had given him those Perfections as such a Nature requires, which are Wisdom in his Mind and Holiness in his Will.

Now if we take but a short View of the present Condition of Man, we shall soon perceive that it is very much altered from what he was at his first Creation; or as our Article expresses it, *very far gone from Original Righteousness, and of his own Nature inclined to Evil*. There is nothing of the Harmony and Order which was then in his Faculties, no Authority in the Superiour, or Obedience in Lower; but the Subjects are in Arms against their Rulers, and Nothing but Civil War within this *Little World*: The Understanding dark, the Will impotent, and the inferior Faculties taking this Opportunity to rebel; Nothing but Tumult in his Breast, and a perpetual Strife for Superiority.

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Sometimes a boisterous Passion gets into the Throne, and obliges the Will to execute its wild Commands: Then a craving and importunate Lust starts up, and, like a Beggar armed, demands to be relieved. Counters and Baubles, by the dim-sighted Understanding, are taken for Gold and Jewels; and the Wretch, in the most deplorable Poverty, thinks himself rich and happy. And by those Phantomes of Pleasure vanish, and the Mind recovers its Sight with Anguish and Amazement: Then Vengeance is denounced against the cheating Affections which have been guilty of this Imposture, and severe Discipline is threaten'd; but they being too great Favourites to be long under Displeasure, are quickly restored to a Capacity of reducing their Lord again to as insignificant Resolutions. In this Circle of Disorder and Confusion is the Life of Man hurried away under the alternate Tyranny of his own Slaves: which is a Condition in which the Goodness of God could never have placed him, and therefore is an evident Proof of the great Alteration from what he was at his first Creation. Which leads me to my Second Particular, where I am to shew,

Secondly, That this Alteration consists in a corrupt and depraved Nature, derived down to us from our First Parents.

When we have seen in how perfect a State Man was made, and under how imperfect an one his Posterity has ever laboured; where should we look for the Cause of this great Alteration, but from that Daring Sin which so fatally poisoned the Fountain from which all succeeding

Generations have flowed? The Malady is too universal to be ascribed to any other Cause.

Tho' one Man, notwithstanding the great Light which God had given him, might be overreached by the Stratagem and Subtilty of a superior Spirit, and drawn in to rebel against his Maker: Yet that all Men of their own Accord should follow such a Leader; that in all Parts of the Earth, and all Ages, infinite Millions of Men without one single Exception, should make themselves Parties in the Treason; that not one Man should be born, who would make the right Use of his Reason, is utterly inconceivable. Of this general Defection there must be some universal, natural, and internal Cause, a Byass upon our Wills and Affections, which so forcibly inclines us to Evil, that our strongest Opposition is in vain. Which we shall find also yet more evident, if we will but observe that those Defections which are so visible in our natural Powers, are most superlatively conspicuous when they are exercised about Moral Actions.

'Tis true, our Mind is obscured, and our Will weak and perverse; yet, in most Cases, they serve us tolerably well. In temporal Concerns we commonly judge with great Nicety, perceive exactly where our true Interest lies, choose the proper Means to pursue it; foresee Dangers and Difficulties afar off, use the necessary Caution to guard ourselves against all Accidents, and usually have Resolution enough vigorously to follow the Dictates of our Understanding. But when Duty calls for our Watchfulness and Diligence, Virtue and Piety, for our Application, we are quite

ber Creatures : Our governing Powers are
enummed and asleep, and those only active
which should be suppressed. There is a perfect
stupor upon the Mind, and the Will is refrac-
tory : The Beauty of Holiness shines in vain, nor
can all the Rhetorick that is contained in the
strength of those Arguments which persuade to
virtue, engage our Ear : A Crown of Life it
self put into the Ballance against the emptiest
pleasure, is out-weigh'd, and everlasting Tor-
ments have no Terror in them. So that the Dar-
ing of Mankind, Interest, in this Case has lost
all its Charms, and Self-preservation ceases to be
governing Principle. Whereas in other Mat-
ters, as was observed, the case is quite different.
No Man runs into the Fire, or walks on till he
trops down a Precipice which he sees before
him : But in his moral Actions, infinitely greater,
and no less certain, Dangers put him in no
fear at all. A Bottomless Pit is before him, yet
he hastens on without Thoughts of stopping,
though the Shortness and Uncertainty of Life
make him always near the Brink of it. He treads
undaunted in Paths that lead to Flames, which
he believes shall never be extinguished, feeling
at the same time the *Worm* that never dies, gnaw-
ing in his Breast. Now what Account, I beseech
you, can be given of this monstrous Stupidity,
with relation to Sin only, running through an
entire Race of rational Creatures, but the Ve-
il of Sin itself? Which from the Root of hu-
man Nature, has ever spread itself through all
Branches, and brings forth this accursed Fruit :
And this appeared as early as was possible ; for

the first Man born of *Adam* was a Murderer as soon as there was a Second for him to kill.

The Scripture is very clear in this Matter: I shall instance only in a few Places, because what I shall have Occasion to mention on the next Head, will prove a great deal more, and therefore abundantly confirm this. *Gen. c. v. v. 3.* we are told, that *Adam* begat a Son in his own Likeness, after his Image, and called his Name *Seth*. By which nothing can be meant, but that he was begot with such a corrupt and depraved Nature as his Father's. For there was no Need, certainly that the Holy Ghost should observe to us, that *Adam* begat a Son like himself in his Essential Properties and Outward Figure, which was more than what was common to all Creatures and was a Blessing given, when God said, *fruitful and multiply*. Besides, if this had been the Meaning of it, the Observation no doubt had been most proper, upon the Birth of his first Son: But since the Design of God was to let us know that Corruption was entailed upon the Children of *Adam*, it was reserved till that Son was born, in whose Posterity the Species was to be preserved, and that was *Seth*, from whom *Noah* lineally descended. And that this Meaning of the Words might not be overlook'd, there is an emphatical Repetition of the same thing, *Adam* begat a Son in his own Likeness, after his Image; and this introduced, by calling to our Remembrance, that *Adam* himself was made *the Image of God*, *ver. 1.* which had been utterly needless, unless by the *Antithesis*, to show the great Difference between the Image

which *Adam* was made, and that after which
Seth was begotten. And that as *Adam's* Like-
 nesses to *God* lay chiefly in his moral Qualities,
 the Wildom of his Mind, and Holiness of his
 Will: So the Image of *Adam* in *Seth*, denoteth
 the inherent and hereditary Depravation of both
 in him. 'Tis evident also, that *St. Paul* takes the
 Image of *Adam* in this Sence, when he
 says, *The First Man is of the Earth, Ear-* 1 Cor. xv.
by, the Second Man is the Lord from Hea- 47, 49.
ven: And as we have borne the Image of the ear-
thy, we shall also bear the Image of the Heavenly.
 Again, Soon after this, we have *God's* own
 Judgment of his Work, Man, as now corrupt-
 ed and depraved: For He doth not charge on-
 ly particular Persons with actual Wickedness,
 but Mankind in general with an universal and
 habitual Disposition in their Minds towards it:
And God saw that the Wickedness
of Man was great in the Earth, and Gen. vi. 21.
that every Imagination of the Thoughts of his
Heart was only evil continually: And in ano-
 ther Place, *God* charges this upon
 him, *even from his Youth*; which can Ch. viii. 32.
 imply no less than that it is born with him:
 which is a quite contrary Account of the Nature
 of Man, from what he gave of it at first, when
 he pronounced it *very Good*.
 But that which puts this Question beyond all
 Doubt, is, That before Man can be restored to
God's Favour, his *Nature* must be renewed by
 Grace, which is grounded only upon the original
 Corruptions of it; and therefore this *Renovati-*
on of his Nature is called *Regeneration*. And
 when

when the hereditary Filth and Corruption of Man's Nature is thus cleansed away, he is said by Christ to be born again, and by St. Paul, put on the New Man. And hence it was, that *Washing* became the initiating Ceremony, and *Water* is appointed by God to be the outward and visible Sign of this inward and Spiritual Grace; both which our Saviour couples together in his Discourse with *Nicodemus*. *Verily, verily,*

Joh. iii. 5, 6. *I say unto thee; except a Man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. That which is born of the Flesh, is Flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit.* Here *Flesh* and *Spirit* are manifestly used in direct Opposition to each other, to express the two different States of Man by *Nature* and *Grace*: And these few Words if duly weighed, will be found to contain the whole Doctrine we are upon. Here is, in the first place, declared the absolute Necessity of supernatural Regeneration, which implies (as was observed) a Corruption of our natural Generation; here is also expressed the Universality of this Corruption, for as much as all men are *Flesh*; and lastly, here is the Universality of the Propagation of this Corruption, since whatsoever is born of the flesh, is flesh.

Thirdly, I am now to shew, that this original Corruption in us, has the true and formal Nature of Sin.

Whatsoever wants that Symmetry, or any way deviates from that regular Order in which God made it, is in its kind Evil. And as when the Nature is obstructed in its ordinary Method of working

working; the Production is monstrous, and by natural Irregularity odious to all Beholders: when a rational Creature is defective in any moral Qualities which belong to the Perfection of his Nature, he becomes morally evil, and odious in the Pure Eyes of G O D. *Adam* before his Fall, by reason of his original Righteousness with which he was created, was such a Creature as Man ought to be, and therefore the Just Object of G O D's Love and Favour; as his Children would have been, had he kept Integrity, and they been born in his Righteous Image: But he falling, and they being born the Image of their lapsed Progenitor, that is, with Dispositions in their Nature quite contrary to the Will of G O D, are such Creatures as Man ought not to be, and consequently as just Objects of G O D's Hatred and Displeasure. G O D requires Truth in the inward Parts, as *David* observes in the Words following the Text: And therefore if there be Error in the Understanding, with regard to our Duty, Disobedience in Will, or Irregularity in the Affections, it is material to enquire how they came there, whether contracted by evil Customs, or born with us: They are evidently a Transgression of the Law, and therefore have the true and formal Nature of Sin. And accordingly we find this original Corruption of Man's Nature represented as such in Scripture under great Variety of Expressions; especially by *St. Paul*, whose proper Province it was, as Apostle to the Gentiles, to encourage these, and humble the proud Jews; by

1 John iii. 4.

by shewing, that though the latter were for some time particularly favoured by G O D, and his chosen People, yet by Nature, they and the Gentiles were the same sinful Creatures, and equally stood in need of a Redeemer.

He tells them therefore, that
Rom. iii. 9, 19, 23. *all the World was become guilty*

Chap. v. 16. 18. *before G O D; that all men*

Jews and Gentiles, were under Sin, under Condemnation, shut up together under Sin; that All had sinned, and come short of the Glory of G O D. Which Propositions being universal, and no Exception made as to those who die before they commit actual Sin; it is evident, the Apostle must mean principally the original Pollutions of their Natures, by which they are truly Sinners, and liable to the Wrath of G O D; as is more expressly declared by him

when he tells us, *That we are by Nature the Children of Wrath.*
Eph. ii. 3.

And the Punishment of Adam's Sin having reached all Men, is a Demonstration that the Guilt of it has done so too. It has reached such as cannot sin actually, Infants; and yet the

Reason which the Apostle gives, that
Rom. v. 12. *Death hath passed upon all men, is, because all have sinned.* From Adam to Moses there was no positive Law enforced by the

Penalty of Death. Nevertheless, St. Paul, *Death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them who had not sinned after the Similitude of Adam's Transgression, who is the Figure of Him that is to come.* Since then by their own Sins they had not incurred the Penalty

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Death, and indeed could not, because there was no such Punishment threatned; nothing can be plainer, than that their Death was the Punishment of *Adam's Sin*, in which by Nature they were all Partakers. And it is very remarkable, that the first Man who died, and that a violent Death too, which carries in it a more signal Mark of Punishment, was *Abel*, who was so far from provoking *GOD* by his own Sins, that we are told, that *the Lord had respect unto Abel, and to his Offering*. And the Author to the *Hebrews* gives this farther Testimony of him, that by *faith Abel offered unto GOD, a more excellent Sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained Witness that he was Righteous*. What then must this Righteous Man's Death be imputed to, but the common Guilt in which he was involved with all Men? And this Sinfulness of Man's Nature gave *St. Paul* Occasion in the Place before cited, to call *Adam the Figure of the Messiah*: All Men being made Sinners by his Sin, as on the other Side they are justified by *CHRIST's* Righteousness. He enlarges on the Parallel for ten Verses together in that Chapter, which there would not be the least Ground for, unless, as by *CHRIST's Stripes we are healed*, so by *Adam's Sin* we had been wounded. And as the Punishment extended to all, so did the Remedy too, which is a farther Confirmation of this Truth. Immediately after *Adam's* Sin, a Redeemer was promised; but if *Adam* had not been a publick Person, in Covenant with *GOD*, not only for himself, but all Mankind, which he had radically in him, and if his Sin had

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been

been only personal, is it conceiveable that the Remedy should not be given till Four thousand Years after the Distemper? But the Distemper being universal, and the promised *Seed which was to bruise the Serpent's Head*, being also a *Propitiation for the Sins of the whole World*; the Remedy came seasonably in the Fullness of Time, when God saw fit to give it, the Benefits commencing from the Date of the Promise.

Thus I hope it fully appears, ~~that~~ the Doctrine of the Catholick Church concerning *Original Sin* is not only true, and clearly supported by Scripture, but a Doctrine of the greatest Weight and Importance; no less than a Fundamental Article of the Christian Faith, upon which the Gospel Dispensation is built, it being the very Cause of God's sending his Son to take our Nature upon him. However, there were very early in the Church, as well as at this Day Hereticks, who opposed it, and thereby put quite another Face upon Christianity. They interpret away the most glorious Manifestation God ever made of Himself: They shut their Eyes against those Mysteries which Angels themselves covet to look into; and have rendered the Christian Church little more than a School of Philosophy. Nor is it any Wonder, if we consider, that instead of allowing the Scripture to be the Rule to form their Opinions by, These Men have made their Opinions the Rule to interpret Scripture by, and that, even in Matters of Faith. In dealing with them therefore, we are not so much concerned to shew them Text by Text, which would be endless, how they rack

and torture the Holy Book, to make it confess what it knows nothing of : But to confute their Arguments, and shew the Invalidity of those Reasons, which make them fly to such absurd Expositions. And if this be done, we may expect that they will be content to let the Bible, as well as other Books, speak its own Sense. Which leads me to the Fourth and last thing I proposed, viz. To consider the Objections which have been urged by the Adversaries of this Doctrine ; and they are chiefly these Four.

1. They say, That if *Adam* had been created in such a State of Original Righteousness, as has been represented, it had been impossible for him to fall.

2. That his Sin was only personal, and could only pollute his own Nature, it being inconceivable how it should infect all his Posterity.

3. That admitting some sort of Hereditary Corruption were derived down to us all, whatever That be, yet it cannot have the Nature of Sin, because involuntary in us, and altogether unavoidable.

4. That if the Sin of the First Man was to involve all his Posterity in Guilt, and that Sin certainly foreseen ; it was not consistent with the Goodness of God to make a Creature upon such Terms.

Now tho' one short Answer might be given to all this, and it would be sufficient to say, that plain and positive Proofs from Scripture of any Divine Truth ought to silence any Scruple in our Mind against it, and may justly require an humble mission, from those especially whose

Weakness and Imperfection is the Thing proved. Yet for fuller Satisfaction, I beg your Patience while I consider these Objections distinctly.

First then, they say, That if *Adam* had been created in such a State of Original Righteousness, as has been represented, it had been impossible for him to fall.

These Men suppose *Adam* endued by God at his Creation with only Natural, but no Moral Perfections, and his Will equally poised (if I may so speak) between Good and Evil, entirely indifferent to either: Imagining that such Will-edom in his Mind, and Holiness in his Will, as we call Original Righteousness, would have sufficiently armed him against the Tempter, and effectually have secured him in his State of Innocence. But this Mistake arises for want of distinguishing between that Holiness which belongs to a Moral Agent, as such, in a State of Probation; and that which belongs to one who hath approved himself upon Tryal, in a State of Perfection. The former can be in no higher a Degree than is consistent with such a Liberty as is requisite to render our Actions good or evil, and ourselves capable of Rewards and Punishments; and therefore may be departed from. And as we know of no Rational Creatures that God ever made impeccable; so we know of none but such as have actually Fallen; for there are *Angels that kept not their first Estate* as well as Man: And that there are any of either kind so happy, as to be confirmed and fixed immutably in their Obedience, is by the Grace of God as a Reward for their voluntary Perseverance in their Duty in their State of Probation.

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What was the Sin of those glorious Spirits, or what drew them into it, are as yet among the *Secret Things which belong unto the LORD*: But as much we may surely affirm, that if such excellent Creatures, so near their Maker, could without a Tempter, much easier is it to conceive how Man might; who had not only the same Liberty in himself which the Angels had, but was moreover exposed to the Craft and subtilty of a most malicious Adversary, much superior to him in his intellectual Faculties.

2. They say, that *Adam's Sin* was only personal, and could only pollute his own Nature, being inconceivable how it should infect all Posterity.

This they say; but have no other Reason for than the Difficulty they find in explaining it; whom we may answer in *St. Paul's* *Rom. i. 22.* words, that *professing to be wise, they became Fools*. For this Objection springs out of equal Ignorance and Pride, and borrows all its force from no wiser or modester a Supposition than that of Man's Omniscience: For if there be any Truths beyond the Reach of Human understanding, why may not this be one of them? Yet as wild and extravagant a Principle it is, the Extent of it reaches very far; and serves the depraved Sons of *Adam*, against all the Doctrines which they are not willing should be true. It is the sole Basis on which Infidelity is built, and a most proper Foundation indeed for such a Superstructure. Thus these Men, before they are aware, confirm the Truth in question by so unreasonably opposing it; by this Means

Means discovering themselves to be very apparent Monuments of the Ruins of Human Nature.

Do we not every Day see a great Resemblance between Children and their Parents, not only in the Lineaments of their Face, the Manners and Gestures of their Body; but in the most signal and reigning Qualities of their Minds? The Pride and Forwardness, Humility and Meekness, Covetousness and Ambition, and even the nicer Particularities of Mens various Humours, are oftentimes seen in those Children who lost their Parents before they were capable of Imitation; and therefore were derived down from them by an unseen Means as their Original Corruption. Now if we must not believe of our Senses, till our Reason be satisfied about the Cause of their Objects, I fear the wisest Man must be a Sceptick, and believe nothing: Nor the Derivation of our very Beings from our Parents on this Principle must be denied, as well as that of the Pollution of them.

And if there be such Difficulty in tracing the Causes of the most gross and sensible Appearances in Nature, a greater Degree of Obscurity may be fairly allowed where the Soul is chiefly concerned: Which although it be the Principle of all Knowledge in us, yet is very unable to answer any Questions it may be asked by the Curious, concerning its own Nature and Operations. Its Union with the Body, and the mutual Acting of each upon the other are, and probably will be Mysteries till both are perfected in Glory.

It is sufficient we have all the Evidence the
 thing is capable of. The Matter of Fact is too
 apparent to be denied; the vainest Man must
 when he feels it himself, and the most chari-
 table cannot overlook it in others. The Cause
 could only learn from Revelation; and we
 have the clearest Scripture for it; the Manner
 of that Cause's Working we may be content to
 pass in the Croud of other fruitless Specu-
 lations, and apply our Thoughts more profita-
 bly how to make that Remedy effectual to us,
 which the Goodness of God has provided a-
 gainst it. So shall we draw Happiness out of Mi-
 sery, be Gainers by the Loss of *Paradise*, and
 gain a greater Pitch of Glory, than that from
 which we fell in our First Parents.

3. They add farther; that allowing some
 hereditary Corruption to be derived down to
 from *Adam*: Whatever that be, it cannot
 change the Nature of Sin, because involuntary in
 its Nature, and altogether unavoidable.

This Objection supposes all Sin to be volun-
 tary, which if rightly understood, we have no
 cause to deny. Without the Consent of the
 Will Sin had never enter'd into the World, nor
 could it take place in us, if our Wills were al-
 together unconcerned. But a Sin may be said to
 be voluntary two Ways: First, When it is it-
 self, or proceeds from, the free Motion of the
 Will: And, Secondly, when it is antecedent
 to any free Motion of the Will, but yet doth
 not affect the Will, and is inherent in it as its Sub-
 ject. In the former Sense our Original Corrupti-
 on cannot be said to be voluntary, for it is in

us antecedently to any Motion of our Will, and can no more proceed from that than our very Beings from ourselves. But its being involuntary in this Sense doth not absolve from its Sinfulness, it being voluntary in the latter, and very proper Sense of the Word, as affecting our Will, and inhering in it. It doth not indeed proceed from any Act of the Will, but the Consent of the Will accompanies it, or rather, it is itself the natural Byass and Inclination of the Will to Evil, and to say that is altogether involuntary, it is no less than a Contradiction.

But if any will be so refractory, as still to dispute the Voluntariness of these natural evil Inclinations; they must however acknowledge what they are least willing to admit, the Sinfulness of them: If they will but consider, that our outward Actions owe all their Iniquity to the Sinfulness of their inward Dispositions of the Heart; for if these are not in themselves sinful, a Compliance with them in our outward Actions can never be a Crime. I need not now add, that our original Corruption is voluntary also in Respect of its Cause, and its Effects: For it derives its Being from the most wilful Transgressions of our First Parents, and gives Birth to all our own actual Sins. And as to the latter Part of the Objection, That it is unavoidable in us, 'tis true; but that doth not alter the Nature of the Thing: For tho' it be so, yet it being *contrary to the Law of God*, it will be Sin still, that being the very Essence of Sin, as was shewed before.

But its being unavoidable makes a great Difference, I confess, between it and actual Sin; and there is no less Difference in GOD's Proceedings about them. Both of them render'd the Sinner guilty; but actual Sin immediately pull'd down GOD's unrelenting Justice, whereas original Sin moved his Pity and Compassion. Thus we see the offending Angels, whose Sin was entirely their own, and sprang up and terminated in themselves; who had no sinful Parents to derive it from, or unhappy Offspring to transmit it to, perished without Mercy: When *Adam*, who was to entail his Sin upon his Children, and they, who were to become Sinners thus by unavoidable Misfortune, had a Redeemer provided for them; and He no less than the **Second** Person in the Ever-blessed Trinity.

4. And *Lastly*, They say, that if the Sin of the first Man was to involve all his Posterity in Guilt, and that Sin certainly foreseen; it was not consistent with the Goodness of GOD to make a Creature upon such Terms.

Nay, but, O Man! *Who art thou* that repliest again to GOD? Shall the *Thing formed*, say to him that formed

Rom. ix. 20,
21.

Why hast thou made me so? Hath not the Potter Power over the Clay? I am sure, we have but one Rule by which to judge of what is fit for GOD to do, and that is, by what He hath done. But these bold Exalters of Human Reason, as they set Bounds to the Perfections of their Maker, so they will measure his Actions also by it. To make a Creature, by whose sinle Crime so numerous a Progeny should be

D

ruined,

ruined, and that Crime certainly foreseen, with them no less than Injustice and Cruelty. If it be so, say they, Millions of Millions are called up out of *Nothing* (the Abode of unquestionable Security) only to be thrown headlong into Misery by arbitrary Omnipotence. But there is not more Impiety than Fallhood in this pompous Objection; for it supposes the Sin of Man inevitable, and his Doom irreversible. 'Tis true indeed, *Adam's* Fall, by God's permissive Decree, was certain in the Event, but with Respect to that Ability which God had given him to stand, not unavoidable: He fell by a free Act of his own Will, which was foreseen, but not caused by God: and his Doom was so far from being irreversible, that he was immediately rescued from it by a most amazing Act of Mercy. A new Covenant is made with him, agreeable to the present Frailty of his Nature: The Son of God himself takes his Flesh, that in it He may undergo his Penalty by dying for him; and in his Life of Sorrow upon Earth, performed the whole Law, that Man who had lost his own Righteousness, might now be clothed with his. An unfinishing Obedience is no longer rigorously exacted, but an imperfect, if sincere, and entire, is accepted: And in this weak and tottering Condition of Man, if he should fall even from that, he has not only Leave to rise again by Repentance, but the assisting Hand of God also to help him up.

Now, where is there any Injustice or Cruelty in the Maker, or least Hardship upon the Creature? Doth not Man's Happiness or Misery, be-

the Grace of G o d, still depend upon his own Choice? And, can any Christian pretend Ignorance of it? Is not the History of our Redemption transmitted down to us in the same Page with that of our Fall? And if these daring Objectors in the End find only the severe Justice of G o d fall to their Lot, is it not because, to clamour at that, they visibly shut their Eyes against his Mercy?

After all, how much soever the original Sin of Man may by some be represented as a Reproach to his Maker, and the OEconomy of his Redemption not only denied, but ridiculed by others: Yet if you please, with me, to employ your Meditations upon them for a Moment, it will appear, that the Creation of Man in these Circumstances, is more for the Glory of G o d, than all his other Works.

The Glory of G o d is only the Manifestation of Himself; so that the more of his Nature and Attributes is discovered, the farther is His Glory spread. His Happiness consists in his own infinite Perfections; but till intelligent Creatures were made capable of discerning them in His Works, His Glory lay concealed. Now every Thing in the Creation manifested G o d's Wisdom and Power; and the Abuse of that Liberty which was necessary to constitute moral Agents, made Way for his Holiness and vindictive Justice to appear: Adorable indeed, but dreadful Attributes without Mercy; and there was no room for that to shew itself, till the Creature was made, whose Sin descending to his Offspring was inseparably attended with Misfortune. Here

began the Fatherly Tenderness and Pity of God to display itself; for, till there was an unfortunate Creature in the World, there was no proper Object of the Divine Compassion. Human Pity indeed, reaches to all the miserable, tho' they are so by their own Choice; but this is a Weakness, which however becomes us, on account of the common Infirmities and Calamities from which none of us are exempted. But God is out of the Reach of such a Consideration, and His Compassion can have no Mixture of Weakness and Imperfection; but must be suitable to the Majesty of Heaven, and exert itself without any Diminution of his other Attributes: The Authority of His Laws must be vindicated; His Justice satisfied, as well as His Mercy gratified.

But here a Difficulty starts up which might seem insuperable to the Deity himself: How can infinite Justice and infinite Mercy consistent in a Governour? One requires the most rigid Satisfaction, while at the same time, the other will not be content without free Pardon. This was that made it necessary for the ever-blessed Trinity to unfold itself; for to vindicate the Honour of God's Laws, and at the same time to save Man, no less than all the Three Persons in the Divine Essence must be employed. God's Authority must have been trampled on, or Man lost for ever, had not the Son undertaken to be His Proxy, the Father accepted of the Substitution, and the Holy Ghost completed all, by renewing and sanctifying his Nature.

Now had God never permitted Sin to enter into the World, and no Creature had fallen from

from the Uprightness in which it was created, but all of them had continued steadily in their Obedience; might not their Liberty be first called in Question, and then their Maker's? As if they were driven on in the same Course by fatal Necessity, and it was not in the Power of God to have made Things otherwise. When the *Stocks* had once taken up an Opinion, that all Things here below were under the Conduct of blind Fate, they soon found it necessary to enlarge their Empire, and made *Jupiter* himself subject to it.

Now by whatsoever other Means the Divine Perfections might have been made known to Man, unless they had been seen in their Effects, they would have lost much of their Lustre: And if the Liberty of God had not appear'd, the Glory of all his Works would have been much obscur'd.

On the other side; as Things now are, by the Creation of Man in such Circumstances, what a bright Scene of God's Glory is before our Eyes! The greatest Good is brought out of the greatest Evil, and the whole Deity, (if we may so speak) concern'd in it. The incomprehensible Plurality of Persons in the Godhead is from hence discover'd, God's Liberty demonstrated, and every Attribute displays itself in its utmost Force and Vigour. There is no Jarring between His Justice and Mercy: The former presents itself before us in all its Terror, the latter shining out in its full Glory: Thus *Mercy and Truth have met together, Righteousness*

Psal. lxxxv. 10.

and Peace have kissed each other. Then as for the Honour of God's Laws and Government,

Government, what could more fully vindicate that, or better demonstrate his Hatred and Detestation of Sin, than a bleeding G O D expiring under the Punishment of it? And how could the Love of G O D appear more triumphantly, than by the Son's bearing our Burden; and the Father's laying that Help upon One that was so mighty?

Behold the Mystery of Godliness, which Angels themselves, tho' unconcerned in the Benefits, gaze upon with Admiration! while many of the depraved Sons of *Adam* are labouring to dispute their Saviour out of the Value of his Blood, and themselves out of their Salvation by it. Perverse Men! who will not own the Derivation of any Guilt from their Forefather, when they are copying his very Sin in the Pride and Infidelity of it! Doth not the plainest Scripture stare them in the Face, and tell them, that as by

one Man's Disobedience many became
 Rom. v. 19. *Sinners, so by the Obedience of One*
many shall be made Righteous: That as in Adam
All died, so in CHRIST shall All be made Alive.
 And does not the Old Serpent whisper them in the Ear, and bid them beware how they understand these, and the like Places of Scripture? That they must take care not to be misled by the plain Sense of Words, which must always (whatsoever they may seem to import) be interpreted so as to be agreeable to our Reason, which is the Candle of the LORD set up in our Souls: That there can be nothing in God Himself, or his Dealings with Man, above our Comprehension; and, in short, that Reason is to us the sole Measure of all Truth?

Let

Let us offer up our hearty Prayers to G O D, that in His own good Time He will be pleased to rescue these unhappy Men from such Delusions of Satan, and pull off the Scales from their Eyes, that they may one Day *discern the Things* which so much *belong to their Peace*: That he will also be graciously pleased to confirm and strengthen us in the true *Faith*, and inspire us with *Courage to contend earnestly* for it, against all Opposers: That he will kindle in our hearts the most ardent Affections for our Blessed LORD, who endured such bitter Sufferings to redeem us from the Power of Sin and Death; and that this Flame of Love may shine forth in all the Branches of an entire and sincere Obedience: So shall we the condemned Criminals, on whom the Sentence of Death had passed, be Partakers in the Triumphs of the Cross, and reign with our Blessed Redeemer for ever.

To whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all Honour and Glory, Might, Majesty, and Dominion, now and for evermore. Amen.

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